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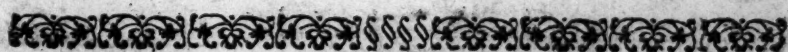
MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE and TRANSACTIONS

OF

Capt. *William Henry Cranstoun.*



[Price Six Pence.]

MEMOIRS



LIFE AND ACTIONS

OF

Capt. William Henry Crawford

(Price Six Pence)

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

And most Memorable
TRANSACTIONS
OF
Capt. *William Henry Cranstoun.* K

CONTAINING

An Account of his Conduct in his younger Years.

His Letter to his Wife, to persuade her to disown him for an Husband.

His Trial in *Scotland*, and the Court's Decree there-upon.

His Courtship of Miss *Blandy*; his Success therein, and the tragical Issue of that Affair.

His voluntary Exile Abroad, with the several Accidents that befel him, from his Flight to his Death.

His Reconciliation to the Church of *Rome*; with the Conversation he had with a Reverend Father of the Church at the Time of his Conversion.

His miserable Death, and pompous Funeral.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster Row*;
W. REEVE, in *Fleet-street*; and C. SYMPSON,
in *Chancery-Lane*. M DCC LIII.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

ELITE

OF THE

TRANSATIONS



NOTES BY MIAZ



CAPTAIN CRANSTON.

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THE
L I F E
O F

Captain CRANSTOUN.

IT is a common Saying, *That we should say nothing but Good of the Dead.* The Meaning of which, I suppose, is, That how wicked soever a Man has been in his Life-time, yet when Death comes, he is then brought before a Tribunal, where he must receive the Sentence due to all his past Enormities; and therefore it is uncharitable to load his Memory with those Offences he has been guilty of here, for which eternal Justice has punished him in another World; or perhaps, because it may seem inhuman to asperse a Man's Character, when Death has put it out of his Power to defend himself. But, notwithstanding the Plausibility of these Reasons, to let the Dead with their Deeds rest in their Graves, I must be of Opinion, that the Benefit of the Living ought to be

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preferred

preferred to any Consideration that may affect the Character of the Deceased. For it is certain, that Men receive more Instruction by Example than Precept; and it is allowed, that the Patterns which have been set us by the Good and Virtuous, in their uncorrupted Integrity, their Meekness and Patience under the acutest Sufferings and Oppressions, their persevering Piety, and their quiet Resignation to Providence under the most disastrous Events, leave more lasting Impressions on the Mind, than the reading whole Volumes of Morality, though couched in the strongest Terms of persuasive Eloquence. Again; What can induce us to a greater Abhorrence to Vice, or what better convince us of its Ugliness and Deformity, or create in us a greater Dislike to the momentary and delusive Enjoyment of its Pleasures, than a visible Example of the dreadful Effects it produces? Virtue is not a more amiable, than Vice a detested Object; and both, in my Opinion, are equally conducive to the Amendment of the Morals of Mankind; by the one, charming us into Love, by shewing us a Picture of perfect Beauty, and giving us a Loathing to the other, by exhibiting a Form the foulest that can be offered to the Imagination.

But how inclinable soever I am to paint the Graces and Loveliness of Virtue, and recommend her to the Choice of every Man; and how reluctant soever I may be to entertain the Reader with the Deformities of Vice; yet, since I have not at present an Opportunity to display the former, and as a notorious Instance of the latter is now before me, I find myself under a kind of Necessity of setting Pen to Paper, that I may not lose the Opportunity which now offers, to give such an Example of that Depravity, of which the

Heart



Heart of Man is capable, as, I hope, will be sufficient to warn others to be upon their Guard against the Impetuosity of their Passions, which, if not timely restrained, hurry Men to the Breach of all Laws, civil and sacred, and at length overwhelm them in the unfathomable Gulph of Destruction.

Thus much I thought necessary to premise, that the Reader might not imagine, I write under any Prejudice to the Man, whose Life and Actions I am about to describe. I sincerely wish he had never given Occasion for those severe Censures the World have past upon him, and hope that a sincere Repentance before his Death, in some Measure atoned for the Enormities of his Life. But to proceed to the Relation.

Captain *William Henry Cranstoun* was born of a noble Family in *Scotland*, illustrious as well for its Antiquity, as the many brave and great Men it has produced; the paternal Estate, however, is not very large; and as the Captain was but a younger Son, the Fortune which was left him, was no more than 1500*l.* the Interest of which, at 5 *per Cent.* was his whole Subsistence, to be paid him by his eldest Brother, in whose Hands the Principal was vested. This was but a poor Pittance for the Son of a Nobleman to maintain the Honour of his Rank, or procure him those Pleasures and Amusements, which those of elevated Birth imagine they have an especial Right to. To help him out of this narrow Situation, and a little to enlarge his straitened Circumstances, his Friends got him a Commission in the Army. But the Captain being intoxicated with the high Notions of his Nobility, could not confine his Expences to his Income; but an Affectation of a Politeness of Taste in all the fashionable Diversions, reduced him to

such Straits and Difficulties, as often put him upon unwarrantable Means to remedy.

As a Relief for his urgent Necessities, and to disengage him from some Incumbrances that lay pretty hard upon him, he thought his best Way would be to marry a Woman of Fortune. Accordingly he found out one to his Liking, whose Fortune, though not great, yet was as large as he could expect, considering the small Jointure he could settle her in, and that he had but little more than his Commission to maintain him and his Family. This, however, served his present Exigencies; and had he been Master of a tolerable Oeconomy, his own Income, together with the Prudence and Virtue of his Lady, in both which she excelled, would have been a pretty Provision. But as Frugality was not his Talent, we shall soon see to what terrible Dilemmas his Profusions carried him.

In the Year 1746, the Regiment he belonged to, having suffered pretty much in the late Rebellion, his Colonel sent him a recruiting into *Oxfordshire*. Coming to *Henley upon Thames*, he paid a Visit to the Lord *Mark Kerr*, his Uncle, who was then settled in that Neighbourhood. It happened, that Miss *Mary Blandy* was there on a Visit at the same Time, who the Captain before had heard was a great Fortune. Here their Acquaintance commenced; and from that Hour he began to scheme out Measures to get Possession both of her Person and Fortune. But before I enter into a Detail of the Particulars of Mr. *Cranston's* Conduct in the Courtship of this Lady, and the tragical Issue thereof, it will be necessary to give some Account of the Lady herself, and of her Father, who, together, furnish out a very melancholy Story; and without the Knowledge of which, a Nar-

a Narrative of the Captain's Life would be very imperfect.

Miss *Mary Blandy* was, at that Time, about twenty-six Years of Age, only Daughter of Mr. *Francis Blandy*, Attorney at Law, and Town-Clerk of *Henley in Oxfordshire*, who married the Daughter of Mr. *Serjeant Stevens*, a young Lady of an unexceptionable Character.

As they had no Fruits of their Marriage but this Daughter, they were extremely fond of her; and therefore made it their whole Study to furnish her with the best Accomplishments of her Sex. With this View, her Mother, who was perfectly qualified for such a Task, undertook to educate her at Home; and not only took Care to instruct her in those Rudiments of Knowledge, which were necessary for one of her Rank, but likewise instilled into her the Principles of Religion and Piety.

The Seeds of Virtue being thus early planted, and in an excellent Soil, quickly ripened into most delightful Fruit; and Miss discovered a happy Genius, in imbibing and improving the Documents given her by her Mother. As to her Temper, she was sprightly, affable, and polite; and with respect to her Person, though she could not be reckoned a Beauty, yet was agreeable, and her Conversation engaging. Her Duty to her Parents was recompenced with an equal Tenderness from them; and her Behaviour to her Superiors was reverential and respectful; with her Equals she was free and candid; and to her Inferiors courteous. In the Interval of other Affairs, she spent her Time in Reading, and had so happy a Memory, that whatever she read she retained. Her Elocution was remarkably free and easy, and her Action just and natural. And, to say all in a Word,

Word, her Knowledge and Capacity were scarce equalled by any of her Sex; and as she had a Treasure of the finest Sentiments, so she knew how to deliver them with the most becoming Grace.

With regard to Mr. *Blandy* her Father, he lived in great Reputation, his Business flourishing, and well respected by the best Sort of People. Thus happily situated, he thought it a Piece of Policy to cherish the good Opinion the World entertained of him, and of his opulent Circumstances, in order that some Gentleman of Estate might seek his Alliance in the Marriage of his Daughter.

But let this be as it will, the young Lady was cried up for a great Fortune, and consequently drew a great Number of Admirers and Visitants to her Father's House. And indeed, *This*, without any other Consideration, had been enough to set her off for a celebrated Wit, and the Toast of all the Fops in the Town. But among all her Adorers, none were so remarkably distinguished as the Gentlemen of the Army; and indeed Mr. *Blandy* himself was so delighted with the Conversation of these Officers, that he was never better pleased, than when he entertained some of them at his Table.

Miss was naturally of a gay and coquettish Humour, and had a great Propensity to Intrigue; and her Evening Walks, private Appointments, and Familiarity with the military Gentlemen, occasioned various Reports to the Prejudice of her Character.

It is easy to imagine, that when she was arrived at Years of Maturity, she had an Inclination to marry; and that several Disappointments she had met with, by the Dislike of her Father to the Offers which had been made her, had pretty much soured her Temper, and, by Degrees, raised in her Mind

Mind a Prejudice even against her Father himself, notwithstanding the great Tenderness and Affection he expressed for her. Her Dissatisfaction, on this Account, appeared plain enough from her saying, *That the old Gentleman did not use her well; and that when likely Offers were made, he found Means to evade giving his Consent for her Marriage, because he did not chuse to give her a Fortune.*

But among the numerous Train of Miss Blandy's Admirers and Devotees, her more especial Regards were reserved for the Gentlemen of the Army, among whom she had a pretty large Acquaintance; insomuch that it was generally supposed she was on the very Point of Marriage with one Capt. D——, with whom she frequently walked in the Fields and Meadows about *Henley*, and was so fond of him on all Occasions, that People did not scruple to say, notwithstanding her Pretensions to the strictest Virtue, she was not capable of denying him any Favour he could ask of her. But whether her Over-fondness created a Dislike in the Captain, or whether he was called away from the Place, or that the Father would not give his Consent; or whatever was the Reason, the Match was not concluded. Upon which Captain *Cranstoun*, whom we shall now bring again upon the Stage, resolved to push his Fortune.

Mr. *Cranstoun* was then about six and forty Years of Age; and though of a mean Aspect, yet was possessed with some Talents that generally take with the Fair Sex, that is, a genteel Behaviour, Complaisance, and polite Flattery; to which, if we add the Honour and Title of his own Family, and his Relation to others of the Nobility, there is no Wonder, that either Mr.
Blandy,

Blandy, or his Daughter, should entertain and caress him in an extraordinary Manner.

After the Captain's first accidental Interview with Miss at Lord *Mark Kerr's*, being much delighted with her Conversation, and much more so when he understood she was a great Fortune, soon found Means to insinuate himself into the Acquaintance of her Father, which it was not very difficult to do, when a Man knew his weak Side; which was, to be fond of Applause, and an Affectation of a Familiarity and Friendship with Men of Figure and Eminence. His usual Apology for leaving his Company was, I am absolutely engaged to dine, or sup—with my Lord —, or Sir *John* — or even with a Duke, or a Prince; from whence he would insinuate a Belief of his own Importance.

Mr. *Cranstoun* had seen enough of the World to know how to turn this Foible to his own Advantage. Accordingly he made frequent Visits in Mr. *Blandy's* Family, where he never failed to make a Parade of his noble Birth, and great Alliances; by which Means he gained so great a Share in the old Gentleman's Favour, that he was never easy but when he enjoyed the Captain's Company; who at length became, as it were, one of his Family, lodged in his House, and constantly fed at his Table. Nor was he unmindful of the grand Point in View, the gaining the Affections of the young Lady, for which he had all the Opportunities his Heart could wish.

That he was a perfect Master of the Art of Courtship, is evident from hence, that he was capable of making an Impression on the Heart of a Lady, who was remarkable for the Excellence of her Understanding, and who could not but see the despicable

despicable Figure her Lover made ; diminutive in his Stature, disfigured by the Small-pox to such a Degree, that his Face appeared all in Seams, blear-eyed, and of a very mean Aspect. Yet, notwithstanding all these Disadvantages, he was able to surmount all Difficulties, and gain an absolute Command of the Lady's Affections.

The Captain, perceiving he had made no small Progress in her good Opinion, took an Advantage of a Declaration she herself made, in a Conversation they had upon the Topick of Love : For she told him of ' an advantageous Match that had been ' made to her, but was afraid the Gentleman was ' not formed to make her happy.' *Cranstoun* did not fail to turn this into an Argument to recommend himself to her kind Regard ; and very naturally asks her, ' Whether she did not prefer mutual Love to the Grandeur of Life ? ' And her Answer (still more unguarded than her Declaration) ' That she preferred the Man she loved and ' esteemed before all others,' gave him a fair Opportunity to make her a free and undisguised Offer of his Love.

But, in order to convince her of his Sincerity, and to prevent her Surprise from any Intelligence she might afterward receive, and to obviate all Difficulties that might arise from thence, he introduces his Proposal, by informing her, That he had a very intricate Affair then depending in *Scotland*, which was no less than a Charge of being married to another Woman, the Validity of which was to be tried in a Court of Judicature, and so confident was he of the Share he already had in her Affections, that he very modestly asked her, ' If ' she loved him well enough to stay till this Affair ' was determined ? ' Her *Condescension* in the Reply is as remarkable as the Captain's *Modesty* in the

the Question: 'If my Papa and Mamma would approve of my staying for you, I readily consent thereto.' This, it must be confessed, was an extraordinary Kind of Courtship; and I believe the Captain is the first Man that ever told a Lady, whom he addressed for a Wife, that he was already under such nuptial Engagements, as could not be dissolved but by the Courie of Law; the Issue of which he himself knew was very doubtful; since, by the Law of *Scotland*, Cohabitation effectually establishes a Marriage.

This Courtship, however, was not managed so secretly, but it came to the Ear of the Lord *Mark Ker*, the Captain's Uncle, who was no sooner apprized of it, than he immediately informed Mr. *Blandy*, in order that he might take Measures to preserve the Honour of his Family, and his Daughter from Ruin; for that Mr. *Cranstoun* had then a Wife and Children in *Scotland*.

Mr. *Blandy* was greatly alarmed by this Information, and immediately acquainted his Daughter with it, and likewise her Lover. She was not at all surprized at the News, because she had been before prepared for it; and as to the Captain he put on a good Assurance, declared it was no more than a little Scene of Galantry; that he had indeed entered into an idle Contract with a Girl in *Scotland*, but that he was never legally married; that he was able to set it aside without the least Difficulty, and that he would soon do it by an Appeal.

The Captain, having thus secured his Interest in the Daughter, thought it highly necessary to bring over the Mother into his Party, which he did with no great Difficulty; so that at last the Mother seems no less infatuated than her love-sick Daughter: For when the Captain averred upon his

his Soul, that he never was married, she only replied, ' Very well, I will take your Word for that.' What! take his word for that, which if not true, must necessarily be the utter Ruin of her only and beloved Child. Surely she would have acted much more prudently, had she not only suspended her Assent, but discouraged his future Pursuit, till Matters were cleared up to their mutual Satisfaction. But such was her entire Confidence in the Honour of this roving Officer, who might, for ought she knew to the contrary, have a Wife or a Mistress in every Town he had been quartered at, shews the Weakness of her Understanding, or her little Experience in the Tricks and Deceits of Mankind.

But tho' the Captain seemed to make light of this Affair of the *Scots* Marriage, and carried it off with an Air of Indifference; yet inwardly he was terribly chagrined, and vexed that his Uncle should make such an unlucky and unseasonable Discovery, which he was sensible would be an eternal Bar to the great Project he had of bettering his Circumstances by this Lady's Fortune, if he could not contrive some Scheme to get his first Marriage annulled. Not that he had any Objection to the Person, or Conduct, or Virtue of his Wife; but, so long as he was obliged to maintain her and her Children, his Means for his own Support were so small, that he could not make that Figure in Life, unto which his Ambition aspired.

Having beat his Brains for some Time, to find an Expedient to help him out of this Emergency; he could think of no better than to persuade his Wife to disown him for her Husband. For which Purpose, he writes her a Letter in the following Terms.

‘ *My Dear,*

‘ **T**H O’ the Proposal, I am going to make to
 ‘ you, may seem very disagreeable, and
 ‘ perhaps shock you very much at first View :
 ‘ Yet, when you have heard my Reasons, I doubt
 ‘ not but your wonted Regard for my Interests,
 ‘ which are inseparable from yours, will prompt
 ‘ you to prefer that before all other Considerations.
 ‘ I need not tell you, that I have no other Way
 ‘ of rising to Preferment, but in the Army ; but
 ‘ small is my Chance, and little Ground have I
 ‘ to expect to be advanced there, so long as it is
 ‘ known I am incumbered with a Wife and Family :
 ‘ But could I once pass for a single Man, I have
 ‘ not the least doubt of being quickly preferred ;
 ‘ which would procure me a Sufficiency to main-
 ‘ tain you, as well as myself, in a much genteeler
 ‘ Manner than I am now able to do. When I
 ‘ have accomplished my Purpose, I will then come
 ‘ and live with you, and enjoy ourselves in Ease
 ‘ and Plenty. As to the Fraud I may be charged
 ‘ with, in deceiving the World to serve my own
 ‘ Ends, I value it as nothing, so I but gain my
 ‘ Point. All therefore I have to request of you
 ‘ is, that you will transcribe the inclosed Copy of
 ‘ a Letter, wherein you disown me for your Hus-
 ‘ band, put your Maiden Name to it, and send
 ‘ it to me by the Post. All the Use I shall make
 ‘ of it will be to procure my Advancement, as
 ‘ above-mentioned, which will necessarily include
 ‘ your own Benefit. In full Assurance that you
 ‘ will comply with my Request, I remain

‘ *Your most affectionate Husband,*

‘ *W. H. Cranstoun,*’

But

But notwithstanding all these specious Pretences, his Wife could not be induced to renounce her Claim in him, though she had no great Reason to be satisfied with his Behaviour to her; for, having little or no Subsistence but what depended on his Friends, she was afraid, if she should deny herself to be his Wife, they would withdraw their Kindness from her. The Captain, however, repeated his Request with great Earnestness, as if the whole Happiness of his Life depended on her granting him this single Favour. After abundance of Entreaty on his Part, and Reluctance on hers, she at last suffered herself to be imposed upon, copied his Letter, by which she disowned herself to be his Wife, and subscribed it with her Maiden Name, *Murray*.

No sooner had the Captain got this Acknowledgment under her own Hand, but with a Baseness and Ingratitude that can hardly be parallel'd, he sent Copies of her Letter both to her Relations and his own in *Scotland*; which so alienated their Minds, that both the one and the other withdrew their Support from her, whereby she was reduced to the utmost Poverty and Distress.

Not satisfied with this Usage of a Woman, to whom he had no Objection, but that she was his Wife, he commenced an Action to prove the Illegality of his Marriage, as a Ground for a Divorce, with a View to deceive Mr. *Blandy*.

Upon this, he brought on his Cause to be heard before the Judges in *Scotland*, where he produced her Letter as an Evidence against her, which greatly inclined the Judges to favour his Cause. But when the Wife came to make her Defence, and produced the Letter, in his own Writing, which she had only copied at his Request, for the Reasons above assigned; and declared,

clared, that nothing but a publick Insult upon her Virtue, could have induced her to detect his Villany; as soon as she had produced this Letter, and verified it to be his own Hand-writing, the Court gave a Verdict against the Captain, and confirmed their Marriage. Upon which their Relations took her again into Favour, as an Object worthy their Compassion. The Captain, not satisfied with this Verdict, appealed to the next Sessions.

But, notwithstanding this Miscarriage, the Captain still kept up his Spirits, and persuaded Mr. *Blandy*, that the Affair could not be decided till the next Sessions, when he had not the least Doubt but it would terminate in his Favour; and gave him such plausible Reasons, as prevailed on him to wait till that Time.

The Captain, not at all discouraged with his late Overthrow in *Scotland*, pursues his Amour with Miss *Blandy*, with as much Eagerness as ever; and, not trusting to the uncertain Event of his Law-suit, makes use of all his Cunning to get Possession of his fair Mistress, without running the Hazard of a second Disappointment. To which Purpose he persuaded her, with all the Power of his Rhetorick, to consummate their Marriage privately. Miss, however, was not so blinded with Love, as absolutely to resign the Use of her Reason to his Pleasure; but endeavoured to convince him that his Proposal would be attended with the worst Consequences; yet did not shew that Repentment as became one truly sensible of an Affront offered to her Honour and Virtue; nor did she so much as reproach him with the Baseness of his Heart, which was capable of meditating a Design so manifestly subversive of her Peace and Happiness.

In

In the mean Time, the Captain's Wife, in *Scotland*, understanding what Use her Husband made of her Condescension in complying with his Request, in facilitating a Match he was about to make with a Lady at *Henley*, thought it highly necessary to disabuse that Lady and her Friends, in order to prevent those Evils that might be the Consequence of their Ignorance. Accordingly she writes Letters to Mr. *Blandy*, and his Daughter, to inform them that she was Mr. *Cranstoun's* lawful Wife; inclosing at the same Time the Decree of the Court in *Scotland*, that was made in her Favour, whereby their Marriage was absolutely confirmed. This, one would have imagined, was enough to disperse those Mists from Miss *Blandy's* Eyes, with which *Cranstoun's* fallacious Arguments had beclouded them, and to convince her, that, notwithstanding his fair Pretences, his Oaths and Protestations, he was no better than an Impostor, one who, taking Advantage of her free and open Behaviour, had plotted the Ruin of her Virtue and Happiness for ever. Such Reflections as these she might naturally have made upon this extraordinary, self-evident Occurrence. Instead of which, she consults her Mother in what Manner she should behave on this critical Occasion. Her Mother advises her to write to him (for he was not yet returned from *Scotland*) and to beg and require him, upon his Honour, to let her know the Truth. But could she suppose that he, who had already so egregiously deceived both her and her Daughter, would not carry on the Deceit; and that, as he had hitherto led them both blindfold, he would not do all in his Power to keep them still in the Dark? Had it not been much more prudent to have wrote to some Gentleman of Worth and Probity in that Country, requesting him to examine the Court Records, and to send her

her an attested Copy of the Proceedings in this Affair? This would have led her into the Knowledge of the real Truth; instead of which, she makes her Application to him only, whose Interest it was to deceive her. But it was not long before the Captain returned, when he exerted all his Eloquence to convince the Father, Mother, and Daughter, that his Cause was not finally determined, that he had lodged an Appeal, and that the next Sessions he should have a Rehearing, when he did not in the least question, but his pretended Marriage would be absolutely annulled.

The Captain seemed to have weathered this Storm for the present, and all was calm again; the Father seem'd easy, the Mother was pleas'd, and the Daughter happy. *Cranstoun* was received and entertained in the Family as before, though not without some Intermissions of that hearty Welcome from Mr. *Blandy* which he had formerly experienced. The old Gentleman was afraid there was a Snake in the Grass, and began to entertain Doubts and Suspicions of the Sincerity of his Guest; which *Cranstoun* saw plain enough, and after took Notice of it to Miss.

But though the Father did not express that Cordiality for him, as he did formerly, yet this was abundantly made up to him by the uncommon Affection of the Mother, who shewed him more than a maternal Fondness. One Instance of which take as follows. The old Lady, being on a Visit to one Mrs. *Pocock* of *Turville-Court*, was seized with a violent Disorder, which obliged her to continue there some Time. But in the Height of her Illness, when she had any Intervals of Sense, her constant Cry was, *Let Cranstoun be sent for.* *Cranstoun* was then at *Southampton* with his Regiment; but on his receiving a Summons from Miss,

to come away directly on this Emergency, he obeyed, and was soon with her, and immediately waited on the sick Lady, who was so transported at the Sight of him, that she immediately raised herself up in the Bed, took him about the Neck, and kissed him in a most affectionate manner; adding these Words to this fond Action, *My dear Cranstoun, I am glad you are come, I now shall grow well soon.* Nay, she carried her Fondness to such an extravagant Pitch, that *Cranstoun* only must be her Nurse, and administer every Thing that was prescribed for her. And of such wonderful Efficacy was his Care and Attendance upon his Patient, that, though before he came, she was judged to be in the utmost Danger, yet the very next Day after his Arrival, she got up, and on his coming into the Room, she said, *This I owe to you, my dear Cranstoun; your coming has given me new Health, and fresh Spirits: I was fearful lest I should die, and you not here to comfort that poor Girl: How like Death she look!* Is it in the Power of Words to express a greater Tenderness for a Son-in-law, than the old Lady discovered on this Occasion?

But to proceed: This is not the only Instance of Mr. *Cranstoun's* Weight and Importance in this Family. While Miss and her Mother were in London, the old Lady was greatly distressed for Money, having contracted a considerable Debt, unknown to her Husband, which she was at a Loss for Means to discharge. Mr. *Cranstoun*, while they were both fretting and teasing themselves about this unlucky Affair, comes in, and finds Miss in Tears, and on enquiring into the Reason, is told, that her Mother was under the greatest Perplexity on Account of the said Debt. *Cranstoun*, pretending to be greatly affected at

the Trouble he saw them in, asked what was the Sum wanted, and promised to raise the Money; and accordingly, in a short Time. brought Forty Pounds, and threw into the old Lady's Lap, who was so surprized at this uncommon Instance of his Generosity, that for a while she stood speechless, and could only squeeze his Hand, and burst into Tears. But to relieve her Distress, he kissed her, and said, *Remember 'tis a Son, and therefore don't make yourself uneasy; you can't lie under any Obligations to me.* But Miss going to express her own Gratitude for the Favour, was prevented by his kissing her too, and saying, *That was all he desired in Return.*

Now, upon reading this Case, it will naturally be asked, How, where, and for what this Debt was contracted? Whether the Capiain had any View or Prospect of being repaid it; or, indeed, whether he ever had his Money again? Or what other Consideration induced him to strain his Credit (for it can hardly be supposed, that he had such a Sum by him of his own) merely to oblige this good old Lady?

As to the first of these Questions, How, where, and for what this Debt was contracted, this Answer may be given. The Debt, it seems, consisted of two Parts, *i. e.* Ten Pounds of it was contracted in *London*, and the remaining Thirty Pounds at *Henley*. Now, as to the first, it is highly improbable, that Mr. *Blandy* should permit his Wife and Daughter to reside in *London*, without a sufficient Allowance to bear all their reasonable Expences. It is therefore more rational to suppose (nor is it an idle Supposition) that these Ladies, in Company with their dear Friend and Familiar, *Cranstoun*, were willing to partake of all the fashionable Diversions of the Town, during

during their Stay in it. If this was really the Case, and nothing has appeared to the contrary, it is easy to imagine, that a much larger Sum than Ten Pounds might soon be spent in this Way.

Then as to the Thirty Pounds, the other Part of the Debt, this was contracted at *Henley*, for *Fowls, Butter, Eggs, Wine, and other Provisions, chiefly on Account of Entertainments*. But on what Occasions were these Entertainments made? The Truth is, they were made for the Pleasure and Accommodation of *Mr. Cranstoun*, when *Mr. Blandy* was in *London*, and detained there upon Business.

As to the second Question, Whether the Captain had any View or Prospect of being repaid this Sum? It may be answered, He certainly had. For the principal, and indeed the only End he proposed by marrying the Lady was, to get into Possession of a large Sum of Money; by which he could easily reimburse himself whatever Sums he might advance to gratify and please the Mother and Daughter.

Another Question is, Whether ever he had his Money again? He had, and in this Manner. *Cranstoun*, after the Death of his kind Patroness and Advocate *Mrs. Blandy*, perceiving his Reception by *Mr. Blandy* was not so hearty as heretofore, began to doubt the Issue of his Amour. This puts him upon contriving Schemes for recovering the Money he had lent the old Lady in her Distress. Upon this, being then in *London*, and invited by Miss into the Country, he writes her a Letter, full of heavy Complaints, that he was not able to stir out of Doors for Fear of Bailiffs, his Fortune in *Scotland* being seized for the Maintenance of his Wife (*Miss Murray*, as he

called her) and her Child; and that the Debt, which occasioned his Perplexity, was near fifteen Guineas. Miss, without reflecting that the Ground of his pretended Necessity, the seizing of his Estate for the Maintenance of his Wife, ought to have been a strong Argument against her sending him any Relief, very readily remits him the Sum he wanted, being Part of Forty Pounds she had borrowed of one Mrs. *Mounteney*, to pay off Part of her Mother's Debts. Upon receiving this Relief, he comes to *Henley*; where he had not been long, but he puts on a gloomy and thoughtful Air; which Miss soon observing, demands the Reason. He shews her a dunning Letter he had just received from one of his Creditors in *London*, for a Debt of Fifteen Pounds. Miss immediately gave him the Money, being another Part of the Forty Pounds she had borrowed of Mrs. *Mounteney*; so that now he had received Thirty of the Forty Pounds he had advanced as before-mentioned. After this, she made him a Present of her Watch, which no doubt made up the Deficiency, and paid him in full for the Money he had advanced.

Upon the whole then it is plain, that the Captain's Generosity on this Occasion, was merely to ingratiate himself with the old Lady, in order to facilitate his Design on the Daughter.

The Captain's Affair becoming desperate, and receiving frequent Intimations, that his Company was no longer agreeable to Mr. *Blandy*, he takes his Leave, in order, as he pretended, to hasten on the Appeal, which he would certainly bring on the next Sessions in *Scotland*. But before he went, in a Conference he had with Miss *Blandy*, he complained, that her Father's Carriage towards him was greatly altered from what it had been;

been; that he was not conscious he deserved such ill Treatment at his Hands; that however he had still the same Respect for him as ever, and that he was resolved, if possible, to regain his Affections. For which Purpose, as soon as he should get into *Scotland*, he would send her some Powders, which he knew to be of such a friendly and conciliating Nature, that if she would give them to her Father, in such Quantities as he should prescribe, he was very certain, that by their Help, he should recover the Love of his old Friend; that he would put up the Powder in Papers, and to prevent Suspicion, he would write upon them, *Powder to clean the Scotch Pebbles*. Miss promised to give her Father the Powders, in the Manner he, the Captain, should direct, not, as may be charitably imagined, in the least suspecting his villainous Design, or the terrible Effects they would produce.

When Miss received the Powder, she mixed some of it with her Father's Tea, but finding it did not incorporate with that Liquor, she wrote to the Captain, *That she would give her Father no more of it, for Fear of a Discovery*. Upon which the Captain sent her fresh Instructions, that she should mix it in his Water-gruel, or some such thick Liquor. She did so; a large Quantity of Gruel was ordered to be made for her Father, to be in Readiness when he wanted any; into which she took an Opportunity to put a vast Quantity of the Powder. Of this Gruel her Father eat, and was immediately seized with a violent Purging and Vomiting, and complained of a most exquisite Pain in his Stomach and Bowels. Next Morning he found himself easier by his Discharge, and something which the Apothecary had given him. However, in the Afternoon, calling for
some

some more Gruel, she gave him a second Dose of the same, as it appeared on her Trial, though she denied it in her Narrative; this he likewise drank, and was immediately seized as before, though in a more violent Degree. The next Day he took Physick, when Miss would have given him more of the same Gruel, but the Maid would not suffer her; and upon examining it, perceived something in it of a Colour very different from Oatmeal; and from thence the Discovery was first made: For the Particulars of which, and the whole Proceedings against Miss *Blandy* thereupon, we must refer the Reader to her Trial, which has been often published. However, I don't think it will be foreign to my Purpose, to relate Mr. *Blandy's* own Sentiments concerning this unhappy Affair a little before his Death, which happened about a Week after he was first taken.

The Maid suspecting that her young Mistress had given her Father something that had occasioned his Illness, resolved to acquaint him with her Thoughts, and begged he would see his Daughter as little as possible. Upon which he gave Orders to forbid her coming into his Chamber, and then uttered himself in this mournful Exclamation, *O that damn'd Villain Cranstoun! that has eat of the best, and drank of the best that my House afforded, to serve me thus, and ruin my poor Love-sick-Girl.*

When he was judged past Recovery, it was asked him, when he was a little easy, If he would make his Will? But as he was sensible of the Manner in which he received his Death, he chose to die Intestate, and leave the Disposal of his Estate to the Law; giving this for a Reason, in his own Words, *Let me not judge her; I'll leave that to her Maker.*

Being

Being asked by the Doctor, Who he imagined had given him the Poison? He, forcing a Smile, though with Tears in his Eyes, said, *A poor love-sick Girl, but I forgive her.*

Miss earnestly desiring to see her Father, had his Permission; and on her coming into the Room, fell upon her Knees, and said, *Oh! Sir, forgive me; send me where you will, and I'll never see, hear from, or write to Cranstoun any more; so you do but forgive me, I am happy.* Mr. Blandy, with all possible Serenity and Tenderness, replied, *I do forgive thee, Child; but thou shouldest have remembered I was your Father, — and for that Villain, Cranstoun, if thou hadst loved me, thou wouldest curse him, and the Ground he walks upon.*

— Here Miss seemed in great Distress, and answered, *O, Sir, your Kindness to me strikes Daggers to my Heart. I must down on my Knees, and pray that you will not curse me.* Mr. Blandy looked up, and with his Eyes fixed upon hers, said, *I curse thee, Child! no, I bless thee, and I pray, that thou mayest live to repent and amend: — Leave me, lest thou shouldest say something to thy Prejudice; — go to thy Uncle Stevens, he will take Care of thee; — alas! poor Man, I am sorry for him.*

When there were no longer any Hopes of his Recovery, Miss wrote a Letter to Captain Cranstoun, sealed it, and gave it to Mr. Littleton, her Father's Clerk, to direct it, and put it in the Post-house. He, however, opened it, and carried it to the Father, and read it to him; upon which he only said, *Ah! my poor love-sick Girl; but what will not a Woman do for the Man she loves?* The Letter was in the following Words:

DEAR

DEAR WILLY!

MY Father is so bad, that I only have Time to tell you, that if you do not hear from me soon again, do not be frightened; I am better myself; and lest any Accident should happen to your Letters, take Care what you write. My sincere Compliments.

I am ever Yours.

There being very great Reason to believe that Miss was the Occasion of her Father's Death, as well from probable Circumstances, as her own Confession, that she had put a certain Powder into his Gruel, was confined to her Room, even before he died, and soon afterwards, upon the Oaths of the Servants, was committed Prisoner to *Oxford* Gaol; and at the same Time was issued out, and sent into the Country, a Warrant to apprehend Mr. *Cranstoun*. But it seems Miss had taken Care to give him timely Information of the Danger that threatened him.

Cranstoun hid himself for six Months, and then went Abroad. Mr. *Blandy* died the 14th of *August*, 1751. Miss was imprisoned the 16th, and *Cranstoun* arrived at *Bologn* the latter End of *February*, and Miss was tried, and received Sentence of Death, *March* 5, then next. So that *Cranstoun* concealed himself all that Time some where in *Scotland*, as it is supposed, from the just Vengeance which pursued him, in Hopes, no doubt, that the Affair would have taken a more favourable Turn; but when he was informed of the dangerous Situation Miss *Blandy* was in, and that the Evidence was as clear and strong against himself as against her, he thought it was high Time

Time to put himself quite out of the Reach of his Pursuers.

On his Arrival at *Bologn*, he found out one Mrs. *Ross*, whose Maiden Name was *Dunbar*, a distant Relation. To this Woman he applied himself, told her the Distress he was in, and entreated her to protect and conceal him till the Storm was a little blown over, and his Difficulties removed. Mrs. *Ross*, in regard to his Family, for which she professed the greatest Respect and Esteem, promised to serve him to the utmost of her Power; but advised him to change his Name, and to take that of *Dunbar*, which had been her own.

Here the Captain thought himself safe from all his Enemies; but, unluckily for him, some of his Wife's Relations happened to reside in the same Place; who knowing in what a base and treacherous Manner he had used that Woman, and understanding that, to escape the Justice of his Country, he was come to *Bologn*, threatened Revenge whenever they should light on him, for his inhuman Usage of his Wife: For which Reason he kept very close under the Wing of Mrs. *Ross*.

In this Obscurity he remained to the 26th of *July*; when being weary of his Confinement, and fearing he should one Day fall into the Hands of his Persecutors, upon a Consultation held between them, they agreed to decamp by Night, and settle in some other Part of the Country; and the Place they pitched upon was *Furnes*, a Town in *Flanders*, in the Jurisdiction of the Queen of *Hungary*, where he continued till his Death.

Here he lived in a miserable Condition, without being known or regarded by any Body. His wretched Subsistence in this forlorn Condition, depended wholly upon the Goodness of his Brother, who was not only obliged to allow him more

than Twenty-five Pounds *per Annum*. For his Fortune, which was left in his Brother's Hands, was only Fifteen hundred Pounds, the Interest of which, at Five *per Cent.* was paid him annually, till he was cast in trying to disprove the Legality of his Marriage, as hath been before-mentioned. For the Lords of Session in *Scotland*, having confirmed the Validity of his Marriage, ordered Fifty Pounds of the Seventy-five Pounds Interest on the Principal above-mentioned, to be annually paid his Wife, for the Support of her and her Child, which she received, and has lived upon ever since with some of her Relations at *Hexham* in *Northumberland*.

The Captain, in his Retirement, had Leisure enough to reflect on the Misdeeds of his past Life, and finding the Account still multiplying upon his Hands, and the Enormity of his Crimes rising to a prodigious Magnitude, and, what was yet worse, not knowing which Way to get rid of his unsupportable Burden, bethought himself of an Expedient to ease himself at once. Being come to a Resolution, he desires Mrs. *Ross* to beg the Favour of one of the Reverend Fathers of a Convent hard-by to come to him, for he had an Affair of weighty Concern to acquaint him with. The Father comes, and entering into Conversation, the Captain, with a Face truly penitential, delivers himself after this Manner.

‘ *Reverend Sir,*

‘ **Y**OU see before you a poor unhappy Wretch,
 ‘ burdened with a Load of enormous Sin,
 ‘ whose whole Life has been a Contradiction to
 ‘ the Laws both of God and Man. However, I
 ‘ must render Thanks to the Almighty, who did
 ‘ not cut me off, as he justly might, in the midst
 ‘ of

' of my impious Courses, and that he has given
 ' me Time to reflect on the Heinousness of my
 ' Transgressions; among which there is one in
 ' particular, which I now think I ought to lament
 ' as the most atrocious of them all, and indeed as
 ' my greatest Misfortune; I mean, that I have so
 ' long continued in Rebellion to that Church, in
 ' Communion with which, I am sincerely con-
 ' vinced, Salvation alone is to be had. But the
 ' Pleasures and Gratifications of Sense have so to-
 ' tally engrossed my Faculties, as to leave no Room
 ' for a Thought about the great Concerns of my
 ' precious Soul. The Consideration of which strikes
 ' me with Astonishment; my Burden is unsup-
 ' portable; and if, under this mighty Pressure,
 ' you, my good Father, in your boundless Cha-
 ' rity, can afford me any Relief, and save a sinful
 ' Soul from sinking into endless Perdition, with-
 ' hold not your Goodness from one who is over-
 ' whelmed in Darkness and Despair.'

' Son (replied the good Father) the Sorrow you
 ' express for your Sins, if it be genuine and sin-
 ' cere, gives me the utmost Satisfaction, and will
 ' redound to your own unspeakable Consolation.
 ' For nothing is more pleasing in the Sight of
 ' Heaven, nothing more agreeable to the Church,
 ' than when a Sinner turns from the Evil of his
 ' Ways, and embraces those Doctrines, and sub-
 ' mits to that holy Discipline, which Christ him-
 ' self has committed to the Charge of our most
 ' holy Father the Pope, the Head of the *Roman*
 ' Catholick Church, the only true Church in the
 ' World. To him, who is the true Successor of
 ' St. *Peter*, are committed the Keys of Heaven;
 ' whom he admits shall find Entrance there, and
 ' whom he excludes shall be for ever shut out:
 ' But he excludes none who approve themselves

' true Sons of the Church, and comply with the
 ' Rules she prescribes. As to those who were
 ' not bred up in her Bosom, she requires no more
 ' than an unfeigned Renunciation of their former
 ' Errors, and a sincere and hearty Repentance for
 ' all their Sins. If then, my Son, thou findest
 ' thyself thus qualified, I have a Commission to
 ' admit thee among the Faithful, and to pronounce
 ' the Pardon of all thy Sins.'

' Father (said the poor Penitent) your Words
 ' minister Comfort to my despairing sin-sick Soul;
 ' and I promise to submit myself entirely to your
 ' pious Directions. In the first Place, I from
 ' Heart renounce and abjure the Religion in which
 ' I was unhappily brought up, and join myself
 ' wholly and for ever to the holy *Roman* Catho-
 ' lick Church; and this I do from a thorough
 ' Conviction, that she is the only true apostolical
 ' Church upon Earth; and that to the Pope is
 ' given the absolute Power of forgiving Sins to
 ' those who are truly penitent, among whom I
 ' humbly hope I may crave a Place.'

' Enough, enough (says the Reverend Con-
 ' fessor;) I receive thee among the Faithful, and
 ' by the Power delegated to me, I absolve thee
 ' from all thy Sins, and pronounce thee entitled
 ' to all the Joys of the Blessed.'

The Captain being thus eased of the Burden of
 his Sins, his Rest was no longer disturbed with
 gloomy Reflections, and, for the present, his Con-
 science seemed quite lulled to Sleep: I say, for
 the present; for not long after, he was taken very
 ill, and tormented with such excruciating Pains
 all over him, and his Body, and every Limb of
 it so prodigiously swelled, that it was thought by
 those about him he must have burst. In the short

Intervals

Intervals of his Ease, he plainly discovered, that his Conscience was not perfectly at Rest; for then he lamented his Injustice to his Wife, and pray'd that God would forgive him that Sin. And thus, after about nine Days Illness, on the 2d of *December* last, he expired in the most agonizing Torments, and as some say, raving mad.

About a Month before he died, he made his Will, and left his Fortune of Fifteen hundred Pounds to his Daughter, as a Recompence, he said, for having basely endeavoured to cheat her and her Mother out of the whole, in denying his Marriage.

Before his Death, he gave an Account to two of his Confidants, of what he knew concerning Mr. *Blandy's* Death, and often blam'd Miss *Blandy* for her Conduct after she was in Custody.

His Will, with all other Papers that were found in his Custody at the Time of his Death, were sealed up and sent away to *Scotland*, pursuant to Orders sent in a Letter by his Brother for that Purpose.

I must not conclude this Account without observing, That however wretchedly the Captain lived in his obscure Retirement, his Funeral Obsequies were performed suitable to his noble Birth. For, having been lately reconciled to the Church of *Rome*, he was buried in great Solemnity, the whole Corporation of the Town attending the Funeral, and a grand Mass was said over the Corpse in the Cathedral Church, which was finely illuminated, and in which he was buried.

P O S T S C R I P T.

I SHOULD have been glad to have obliged the Publick with the original Letters, that past between Captain *Cranstoun* and Miss *Blandy*, which might have set that tragical Affair, the Poisoning of her Father, in a clearer Light than it has hitherto been; but as, immediately after *Cranstoun's* Death, all his Letters and Papers of every Kind, were sealed up, and transmitted to his Brother the Lord *Cranstoun* in *Scotland*, it is impossible to come at any of them; unless his Lordship would condescend to communicate such, and allow their Publication; which there is good Reason to suppose he never will do, unless by that Means he could justify the Conduct, and clear the Character of his deceased Brother. But as there is no Probability, that the publishing those Papers would have any Tendency to vindicate the Captain's Innocence, we have no Room to expect, that his Relations would contribute to the perpetuating an Odium on his Name, which, for the Honour of their Family, we may reasonably believe, they wish had never been flurred with those infamous Imputations it has been.

On the other Hand, Miss *Blandy*, when she found her Father was past Recovery, took Care to burn all *Cranstoun's* Letters, to prevent, as she expressed it, *their telling Tales*; so that when afterwards her Scrutore and Drawers were searched, not a Scrap or Line was found that could give any Light into the Affair. This indeed was a strong Argument to prove her Consciousness of Guilt; for had the

Corre-

Correspondence between them been perfectly innocent, there had been no Occasion to destroy his Letters : But at the same Time it shews, that all literary Evidence, to prove the Captain's Guilt, was hereby suppressed.

As therefore both Parties have taken such Precautions, to prevent the World from knowing more of this mysterious Affair than what is already made publick, we have all the Reason in the World to imagine, that all other Informations of this Kind, which have not the Lord *Cranstoun's Imprimatur*, must be spurious and surreptitious, and an Imposition on the Credulity of the Publick. And yet we have just now seen drop from a Garret-window, a little trifling Pamphlet, pretending to contain Copies of Letters from Miss *Blandy* to Captain *Cranstoun*, which it is impossible should be genuine for the Reasons above-mentioned ; besides other Marks imprinted on the Letters themselves, which evidently shew them to be of the Author's own Invention.

But not to lose Time in detecting such a palpable Forgery, such a notorious Abuse on the Publick, I shall proceed to make some general Reflections on some Passages of the Captain's Life and Conduct.

Here we see a Gentleman of a noble Family, degenerating from the Principles of Honour and Virtue, which ought to distinguish the Character of a Nobleman, and acting such atrocious Crimes as Nature itself shudders to hear mentioned. To what must this be imputed ? Not to the want of a liberal and generous Education ; for that he certainly had, agreeable to his noble Rank. We can therefore charge it only to the Smallness of his Fortune, and the Greatness of his Ambition. He was obliged to keep Company with Gentlemen of
Figure,

Figure, whose Method of Living was too expensive for his narrow Fortune to support; and yet he must support it, unless he would be content to be thought a poor mean-spirited Soul, and unworthy his high Birth. This, I imagine, put him upon the Scheme of bettering his Circumstances by marrying Miss *Blandy*, who was reputed a great Fortune: This induced him to persuade his Wife to disown him for a Husband, and upon that to endeavour to obtain a Divorce; and it was this that prompted him to put Miss *Blandy* upon poisoning her Father, in order to possess the Daughter and her Fortune, which he was sensible could not be accomplished while the old Gentleman lived.

In *Cranstoun's* Example we may see what sad Effects are sometimes produced, by the unhappy Conjunction of Greatness and Poverty in the same Person. When the Mind is exalted by a Consciousness of high Birth and noble Blood, how difficult is the Condescension, how hard is it to submit to the narrow Circumstances of a mean Plebeian? If any Thing, this Consideration alone may serve to palliate, though not justify, the most obnoxious Part of his Conduct; of which, if he sincerely repented at last, let us here close the Scene, and leave him to the Mercy of his Judge above.



F I N I S.